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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3868
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 2522
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 2645
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 1138
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1914
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 2269
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 2694
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 5122
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK
RHMFIS/EUCOM POLAD VAIHINGEN GE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1801
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 001147

SIPDIS

AF/S FOR B. WALCH
DRL FOR N. WILETT
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E. LOKEN AND L. DOBBINS
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/18/2018
TAGS: PGOV PREL ASEC PHUM KDEM ZI
SUBJECT: ZPP LEADERS DETAIL ABDUCTIONS, TORTURE

REF: A. A. HARARE 1145
B. B. HARARE 1183

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Katherine Dhanani for reason 1.4(d).

SUMMARY

11. (C) Lawyers have drafted affidavits for nine individuals who have recently been abducted and tortured by Government of Zimbabwe actors. Because lawyers have not had access to all abductees that are in State custody, there may be more who have suffered torture and been coerced into making false confessions. We have obtained affidavits from two victims, Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP) Director Jestina Mukoko and ZPP Provincial Coordinator Broderick Takawira, which describe their detention and the treatment they endured before state security officials turned them over to Zimbabwean police on December 22. Both were beaten on the soles of their feet (a form of torture known as falanga) and were forced to give false confessions that they were involved in coordinating and recruiting individuals in preparation for an armed insurgency from Botswana. Even after entering police custody on December 22, both were denied access to lawyers. END SUMMARY.

Abductions, Torture, Forced Confessions

12. (C) Mukoko was abducted from her home at 5:00 am on December 3 when seven people entered her home and refused to identify themselves. On December 4 and 5, she was interrogated and beaten by two different groups of people who asked her about ZPP, accused her of recruiting youths to undergo military training, and interrogated her about Ricardo Hwasheni (the former police officer the GOZ alleges was first enticed to recruit others for military training in Botswana), her contacts in the MDC, and contacts with the Elders including former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, Graca Machel, and Kofi Annan during their late November visit to South

Africa. They also asked her about her connections with the Counselling Services Unit (CSU), and CSU Program Officer Fidelis Midumu in particular. They accused Midumu of helping recruits cross the border into Botswana. (NOTE: CSU treats and documents victims of torture. Midumu - who is an International Visitor Program alumnus - remains in Zimbabwe, although he is "laying low" for now. END NOTE.) When she denied allegations during the lengthy interrogation, her captors forced her feet onto a table and then beat them.

¶13. (C) On December 13, Mukoko was asked to sign a statement detailing her personal background, a ZPP staff retreat in Botswana, and ZPP staff details. She provided these statements but refused to sign a confession to knowing and recruiting former police officer Hwasheni. On December 14, she was forced to make a videotaped confession.

¶14. (C) On December 14, in response to complaints she needed medical attention, a man who identified himself as Dr. Chigumira quickly examined her and she was later given medication. (NOTE: In court on December 29, Mukoko's lawyer alleged that Dr. Chigumira is doctor with the Zimbabwean army. END NOTE)

¶15. (C) Takawira was abducted from ZPP's office on Monday December 8. That day he was interrogated about ZPP's work, including a ZPP trip to Botswana. He was also subjected to falanga, beatings, and continued interrogation on December 8, 9, and 10. His captors forced him to detail his encounter with Hwasheni, whom Takawira had met at the ZPP office in May

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or June 2008. Takawira stated that Hwasheni wanted help traveling to London or Botswana and to publish a book detailing his experiences, requests ZPP declined. On December 10, Takawira was forced to sign a statement and confess on video that he and Mukoko had received a letter from Hwasheni confirming his interest in going for military training outside the country.

¶16. (C) Both Mukoko and Takawira were kept in detention until December 22, when they were blindfolded and taken to Braeside police station in Harare where their captors handed them over to Chief Superintendent of Police Magwenzi. On December 23 police took Mukoko to her home and searched it without the presence of her lawyers as she requested. On the same day, police took a videotaped statement from Takawira, again without his lawyers present as he requested. Lawyers first gained access to Takawira and Mukoko at 12:30 on December 24, just before their initial court hearing before Magistrate Guvamombe (reftels).

COMMENT

¶17. (C) These forced confessions reflect the story that ZANU-PF has been pushing in the local media and within SADC that the MDC and ZPP joined forces to recruit others to launch some kind of armed insurgency from camps in Botswana. The use of falanga as the preferred torture technique is not surprising. CSU and ZPP's data regarding torture throughout the period between the March and June elections indicated it was one of the preferred methods of torture by ZANU-PF militias. In addition, falanga is extremely painful but leaves few visible signs of injury. Takawira, Mukoko and others who have alleged torture are due to be examined by medical doctors, who may be able to confirm the claims in the affidavits. Given that many detainees have still not been able to speak with lawyers, there may be others - in addition to the nine we know of - who were subjected to torture to produce forced confessions. The details of their abductions, mistreatment, and experience once in police custody reflect the continued disintegration of rule of law in Zimbabwe. END COMMENT.

DHANANI